



TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

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Tripler celebrates Black History Month

"Hopefully one day we will live in a nation where we will not have to say that this or that was done by an African American, Hispanic American or an American Women. Rather, our social conscience will dictate absolute respect for all of humanity and we will honor Americans for their contributions to our great American legacy," said special guest speaker, Alphonso Braggs, President, Honolulu, Hawaii Branch NAACP.

The Black History Month celebration was held Feb. 22 in the Kyser auditorium of Tripler Army Medical Center. In addition to the guest speaker, the standing-room only crowd of over 150 was treated to singing, dancing and poetry performed by Tripler staff.

"There is no aspect of our daily lives where we cannot celebrate the contributions of African Americans," said Braggs. "To continue this pursuit of freedom, we must begin by honoring all minority groups, rich heritages and unparalleled commitment to the American dream."

To close out the Black History Month celebration Tripler was honored to be joined by three of the original Tuskegee Airmen in the Tripler chapel, Feb. 27.

"I had to start teaching in 1950 just to find out that over 150,000 Black men fought in the Civil War," said retired Air Force Lt. Col. Alexander Jefferson, 332nd Fighter Group. Jefferson was joined by two other Tuskegee Airmen - U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Lucius Theus, and retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. William H. Holloman III.

Theus began as a private in the U.S. Air Force, retiring as a Maj. Gen. over the course of his 36-year military career. Jefferson was shot down Aug. 12, 1944, over

southern France and spent nine months as a prisoner of war. Holloman was the first black helicopter pilot in the U.S. Air Force.

“The events that had the greatest impact on me are those that included speakers who were part of significant historical events,” said Sgt. 1st Class Wallace B. Carmichael, Pacific Regional Medical Command Equal Opportunity Advisor. “Few guest speakers have impacted the audience like the members of the Tuskegee Airmen. Their real life stories are priceless and left a lasting impression on everyone in attendance.”